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## Statement - International Women's Day 2021

**Kinshasa, March, 2021:** International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. Significant activity is witnessed worldwide as groups come together to celebrate women's achievements or rally for women's equality.

Marked annually on 8th March, International Women's Day (IWD) is one of the most important days of the year to:

- celebrate women's achievements;
- raise awareness about women's equality;
- lobby for accelerated gender parity;
- fundraise for female-focused charities.

The campaign theme for International Women's Day 2021 is “Choose To Challenge” [#ChooseToChallenge](https://www.instagram.com/choose_to_challenge/). A challenged world is an alert world and from challenge comes change. Individually, we're all responsible for our own thoughts and actions - all day, every day. We can all choose to challenge and call out gender bias and inequality, and to seek out and celebrate women's achievements. Collectively, we can all help create an inclusive world.

During this period of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Forum of Parliaments of Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR) has chosen to focus on the effects of COVID-19 on families. Through its committees on “Gender, Children and Vulnerable Persons” and “Humanitarian and Social Issues”, the Forum will continue to specifically examine the increased numbers of reported cases of sexual and gender-based violence, teenage pregnancies and mental



health. By choosing to challenge we shall be advocating for the inclusion of women in post COVID recovery efforts especially at the family level.

We urge the Parliaments of Member States of the ICGLR that enact laws and policies to continue to encourage the implementation of gender quotas and for Member States of the ICGLR to fully ratify the ICGLR Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of sexual gender-based violence against women and children.

FP-ICGLR is an inter-parliamentary organization bringing together the National Parliaments of the 12 Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) namely: the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Uganda, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of South Sudan, the Republic of the Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Zambia.

